WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A master scheduling system for use by simulation users and planning users, comprising:

a first master plan including actual sales orders and a first user interface configured to receive a simulated sales order from a simulation user and provide an estimated delivery date corresponding to the simulated sales order, the estimated delivery date being calculated based on the actual sales orders, the simulated sales order and other simulated sales orders currently entered in the first master plan; and

a second master plan including actual sales orders and a second user interface configured to provide production scheduling and inventory ordering data based on the actual sales orders, the second master plan being intermittently updated to obtain an updated second master plan with new actual sales orders and updated production scheduling data and inventory ordering data based on the actual sales orders and new actual sales orders, and the second master plan being intermittently copied to the first master plan so the first and second master plans intermittently contain identical data.

2.   The master scheduling system of claim 1 wherein the second master plan is configured to be updated once per day.

3.   The master scheduling system of claim 2 wherein the second master plan is configured to be copied into the first master plan once per day, after the second master plan is updated.

4.   The master scheduling system of claim 1 wherein the actual sales orders include simulated sales orders that have an assigned probability, of being converted into an actual sales order, above a desired threshold.

5.   The master scheduling system of claim 1 wherein the first user interface is configured to enter simulated sales orders only in the first master plan.

6.   The master scheduling system of claim 1 wherein the first and second master plans are configured to operate substantially independently of one another accept when the second master plan is updated and when the second master plan is copied to the first master plan.

7.   The master scheduling system of claim 1 wherein the second master plan is configured to provide the scheduling data and inventory ordering data without regard to the simulated sales orders.

8.   A method of generating estimated delivery dates
and of planning production, comprising:

>   providing first and second master plans, each
>   including actual sales order data
>   indicative of actual sales orders;
>   entering a simulated sales order in the first
>   master plan;
>   receiving from the first master plan an
>   estimated delivery date corresponding to
>   the simulated sales order based on the
>   actual sales order data and any other
>   simulated sales orders currently in the
>   first master plan; and
>   receiving from the second master plan production
>   planning data based on the actual sales
>   order data.

9.   The method of claim 8 and further comprising:

>   intermittently updating the second master plan
>   with new actual sales order data indicative
>   of new actual sales orders, to obtain an
>   updated second master plan.

10.   The method of claim 9 and further comprising:

>   intermittently modifying the first master plan
>   so it contains identical data to the
>   updated second master plan.

11.   The method of claim 8 and further comprising:

intermittently modifying the first master plan
so it contains identical data to the second
master plan.

12. The method of claim 8 wherein receiving from the
second master plan production planning data
comprises:
receiving the production planning data based on
the actual sales order data, without regard
to the simulated sales order.

13. The method of claim 8 and further comprising:
inhibiting entry of simulated sales orders in
the second master plan.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein inhibiting,
comprises:
providing a first user interface for entering
the simulated sales order that enters the
simulated sales order only in the first
master plan.

15. The method of claim 8 and further comprising:
receiving from the second master plan inventory
ordering data indicative of inventory to be
ordered based on the actual sales order
data.

16. The method of claim 9 wherein entering a simulated sales order in the first master plan comprises:

      entering a probability indicator indicative of how likely the simulated sales order is to be converted to an actual sales order.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein intermittently updating the second master plan comprises:

      updating the second master plan with simulated sales orders that have an associated probability indicator that exceeds a predetermined threshold.

18. A computer readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform a method of generating estimated delivery dates and of planning production, comprising:

      identifying first and second master plans, each including actual sales order data indicative of actual sales orders;

      receiving a simulated sales order in the first master plan;

      outputting from the first master plan an estimated delivery date corresponding to the simulated sales order based on the actual sales order data and any other simulated sales orders currently in the first master plan; and

       outputting from the second master plan
           production planning data based on the
           actual sales order data.

19.   The computer readable medium of claim 18 and
further comprising:
       intermittently updating the second master plan
           with new actual sales order data indicative
           of new actual sales orders, to obtain an
           updated second master plan.

20.   The computer readable medium of claim 19 and
further comprising:
       intermittently modifying the first master plan
           so it contains identical data to the
           updated second master plan.

21.   The computer readable medium of claim 18 and
further comprising:
       intermittently modifying the first master plan
           so it contains identical data to the second
           master plan.

22.   The computer readable medium of claim 18 and
further comprising:
       outputting from the second master plan inventory
           ordering data indicative of inventory to be
           ordered based on the actual sales order
           data.

23. The computer readable of claim 19 wherein receiving a simulated sales order in the first master plan comprises:

> receiving a probability indicator indicative of how likely the simulated sales order is to be converted to an actual sales order.

24. The computer readable of claim 23 wherein intermittently updating the second master plan comprises:

> updating the second master plan with simulated sales orders that have an associated probability indicator that exceeds a predetermined threshold.